



## Gulf Islands Guide



### Birding at Gulf Islands

Photo by Dr. Olivia Graves

Seashore islands and waters provide habitat for resident birds such as brown pelicans or stop-over habitat for migratory ones. More than 300 species of birds have been sighted at Gulf Islands. Bird watching is a popular activity. Seashore areas are on the Mississippi Coastal Birding Trail and the Great Florida Birding Trail. Colonial shore birds such as black skimmers and least terns nest on the sand from April through August. Their nesting areas on the beach are restricted. Help protect chicks and their parents by looking out for them and obeying the speed limit.

#### Welcome from the Superintendent

Welcome to Gulf Islands National Seashore. In 2010, as we continue to reopen storm damaged facilities, the staff is incorporating environmentally friendly features. These include solar lighting, Geothermal heating and cooling, lumber from recycled plastic, and removal of septic fields as we connect to a sewer system.

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#### Exhibits Enjoyed by All

New exhibits at Naval Live Oaks and Fort Barrancas Visitor Centers are accessible. The new high-definition film, "Gulf Islands: Stories of Survival," shown at the Davis Bayou and Naval Live Oaks Visitor Centers is captioned and audio described.



# Visitor Information

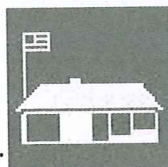
## Visitor Centers

### Florida

#### Naval Live Oaks Visitor Center

(850) 934-2600

Open daily ... 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



#### Fort Barrancas Visitor Center

(850) 455-5167

Open daily ... March-Oct. 9:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

Nov.-Feb. 8:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

Fort Barrancas guided tour daily 2:00 p.m.

Advanced Redoubt guided tour Sat. 11:00 a.m.

#### Fort Pickens Visitor Center

Open daily ... March-Oct. 9:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

Nov.-Feb. 8:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

Fort Pickens guided tour daily 2:00 p.m.

Self-guided tours daily 8:00 a.m.-sunset.

### Mississippi

#### William M. Colmer Visitor Center

(228) 875-9057

Open daily ... 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

For more information on interpretive activities call (850) 934-2600 or go to [www.nps.gov/guis](http://www.nps.gov/guis)

## Pets

Law prohibits pets on Florida beaches; Horn and Petit Bois Islands; West Ship Island swim beach in Mississippi; in forts or other park structures.

Visitors may walk their pets on trails, roads, multi-use paths, and in campgrounds as long as the animals are on a 6-foot leash or less.

Owners must clean up after pets. Please do not leave pets unattended in vehicles. Service animals are allowed throughout the Seashore.



## Operation of Personal Watercraft

With some exceptions, a flat wake zone of 300 yards from the low tide line of all park shorelines is now in effect for personal watercraft to protect submerged grass beds. Contact park visitor centers for more information.

## Entrance Fees - Florida Only

Single Person Entry ..... \$3.00

(Foot, bicycle, motorcycle for 7 days)

Single Vehicle Pass ..... \$8.00

(Valid for 7 days)

Gulf Islands Annual Park Pass ..... \$25.00

(Valid 1 year from month of purchase)

Night Owl Permit ..... \$30.00

(Extends hours of access for single private vehicle. Requires an annual pass bearing a matching signature to the permit.)

### Commercial Vehicles:

Vehicles (1-6 passengers) ..... \$25.00  
(plus \$3.00 per person)

Vans and Minibuses (7-25 passengers) .. \$40.00

Motor Coaches (26+ passengers) ..... \$100.00

## Federal Passes Available

America the Beautiful - the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass

Interagency - Annual Pass ..... \$80.00

Interagency - Senior Pass ..... \$10.00

Interagency - Access Pass ..... Free

## Hiking

Some of the most beautiful barrier island beaches and maritime forests await those who are interested in hiking. The park features several trails that provide hiking



opportunities - from a short 10-minute stroll to several days of multi-day hikes. See pages 8, and 10. Maps are available at the park visitor centers.

### Mississippi - Nature's Way Loop Trail

Davis Bayou Trail

CCC Trail

### Florida - Florida National Scenic Trail

Woodland Nature Trail

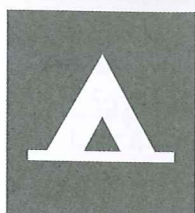
Andrew Jackson Trail

## Bicycling

Bicycles are allowed on roadways and multi-use paths. They are not allowed on nature trails, except for sections of the Florida National Scenic Trail. Keep to the right side of the road and ride in single file. Florida law requires riders age 16 or younger to wear a helmet.



# Camping



## Camping

**Mississippi.** Davis Bayou in Ocean Springs--First-come, first-served. \$16.00 per night. \$8.00 with Interagency Senior or Access pass. Dump station free for campers and \$5.00 for non campers.  
**Florida.** Fort Pickens--\$20.00 per night. \$10.00 with Interagency Senior (Golden Age) or Access (Golden Access) pass. Sewer construction will close parts of the campground in 2010. For reservation information call (850) 934-2622 or 2621.



## Primitive Camping

### Mississippi

Primitive camping is permitted on Horn, Petit Bois, Cat and East Ship Islands. Permits are required for groups of 11 or more. Call (228) 875-3962.



### Florida

Perdido Key - Camping is allowed one-half mile beyond the end of the road to the east end of the island. There is an entrance fee, but no camping fee. Register at Perdido Key Entrance Station.

## Group Camping

10-25 people: \$20 per night  
26-40 people: \$30 per night  
MS -(organized groups only)  
(228) 875-3962  
FL -Naval Live Oaks Group Area  
(youth groups only)  
Fort Pickens Group Area  
(organized groups only)  
(850) 934-2622

## Pavilion Reservations

Some pavilions may be reserved for exclusive use. Weddings, groups over 100 people or the use of special equipment such as generators, music systems, and public address systems require a Special Use Permit.

**Mississippi** (228) 875-3962

Davis Bayou Pavilions #1, 3, 5

1-99 people: \$25

100 plus people: \$100

### Florida

Naval Live Oaks Group Area Pavilion-\$50 (850) 934-2605

Perdido Key West Pavilion-\$30 per side (850) 934-2622

Opal Beach Pavilions A & D - \$30 (850) 934-2622

Battery Worth Picnic Area - \$30 (850) 934-2622

## Davis Bayou

### Boat Launch Fee

Per Day.....\$3.00  
Per Day with Interagency Senior or  
Interagency Access Pass.....\$1.50

## Annual Boat Passes Available

Annual Boat Launch Pass...\$20.00  
Annual Boat Launch Pass with  
Interagency Senior or Interagency  
Access Pass ..... \$10.00



## Fires and Firewood

Fires are permitted in permanent grills or fire rings and no more than 5 feet above the high tide line at Perdido Key primitive camping areas and Mississippi District islands, except for West Ship. Dead wood which has already fallen to the ground may be collected for campfires in the Naval Live Oaks Group, Fort Pickens, and Davis Bayou campgrounds. Contact park visitor centers for more information.



## Accessibility

**Beach wheelchair:** Contact the lifeguards at West Ship Island, Johnson Beach, Opal Beach and Langdon Beach when on duty. Otherwise, in Mississippi call (228) 875-9057 and in Florida call (850) 455-5167 for more information.

**Orientation films** are available at William M. Colmer, Fort Barrancas, and Naval Live Oaks Visitor Centers. Films are captioned and audio described.

# Visiting the Area

You've driven many miles to get here and have finally arrived at your destination: Gulf Islands National Seashore. But now what? How do you spend your time? What should you explore? The park stretches 160 miles from Cat Island in Mississippi to Okaloosa Area in Florida and there are many outdoor opportunities in both districts.



## National Seashore Areas and Hours

District	Area	Hours of Operation
Florida	Naval Live Oaks Area	Open 8:00 a.m. to sunset.
	Naval Live Oaks Visitor Center	Open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
	Fort Barrancas	Open March-Oct. 9:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Nov. to Feb. 8:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Fort tours daily at 2:00 p.m.
	Advanced Redoubt	Open for tours Saturday, 11:00 a.m.
	Perdido Key Area	Open 8:00 a.m. to sunset and to primitive camping.
	Fort Pickens Area	Open 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and registered campers. Fort tours daily at 2:00 p.m.
	Santa Rosa Area (Opal Beach)	Open 8:00 a.m. to sunset. No camping.
	Okaloosa Area	Open 8:00 a.m. to sunset. No camping
Mississippi	Davis Bayou Area	Open 6:00 a.m. to sunset.
	Davis Bayou	
	Visitor Center Area	Open 8:00 a.m. to sunset.
	William M. Colmer	Open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
	Visitor Center	
	West Ship Island	Open sunrise to sunset. No camping.
	Horn, East Ship, Petit Bois, Cat and Sand Islands	Open for primitive camping.

For up-to-date information please call

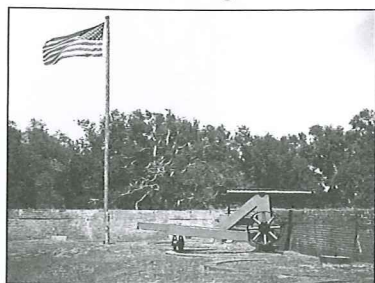
FL (850) 934-2600, MS (228) 875-9057 or go to [www.nps.gov/guis](http://www.nps.gov/guis)



# What to Do

## Florida District

### One Day



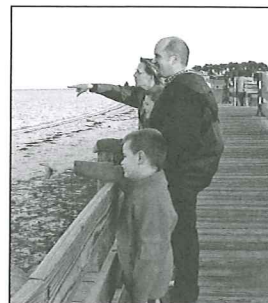
- Take a ranger-led tour of Fort Barrancas or Fort Pickens daily at 2:00 p.m.
- View the park's HD orientation film at the Naval Live Oaks Visitor Center.
- Relax on the beach at Perdido Key or Opal Beach.
- Spend an afternoon fishing at the Fort Pickens fishing pier.

### Three Days



- Take a ranger-led tour on Saturdays of the fort at Advanced Redoubt.
- Hike the Trench Trail between Fort Barrancas and Advanced Redoubt.
- Attend a ranger-guided program. Programs vary by season.
- Participate in the Junior Ranger or Sea Star programs for children.

### One Week



- Hike along the Florida National Scenic Trail.
- Explore the Coast Artillery Batteries at Fort Pickens.
- Primitive camp at Perdido Key.
- Youth Groups can camp in the youth group camp area at Naval Live Oaks. Call (850) 934-2622 for reservations.

## Mississippi District

### One Day



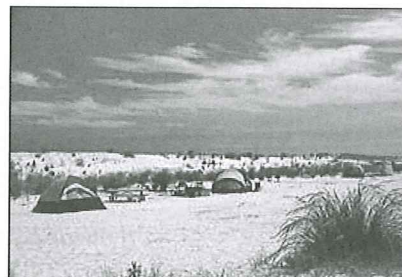
- View orientation films at the Visitor Center.
- Walk the Davis Bayou Trails.
- Look for alligators.
- Enjoy a picnic lunch under the shade of live oak trees.
- Spend an afternoon fishing or crabbing from the pier.
- Attend a week-end program at the visitor center.

### Three Days

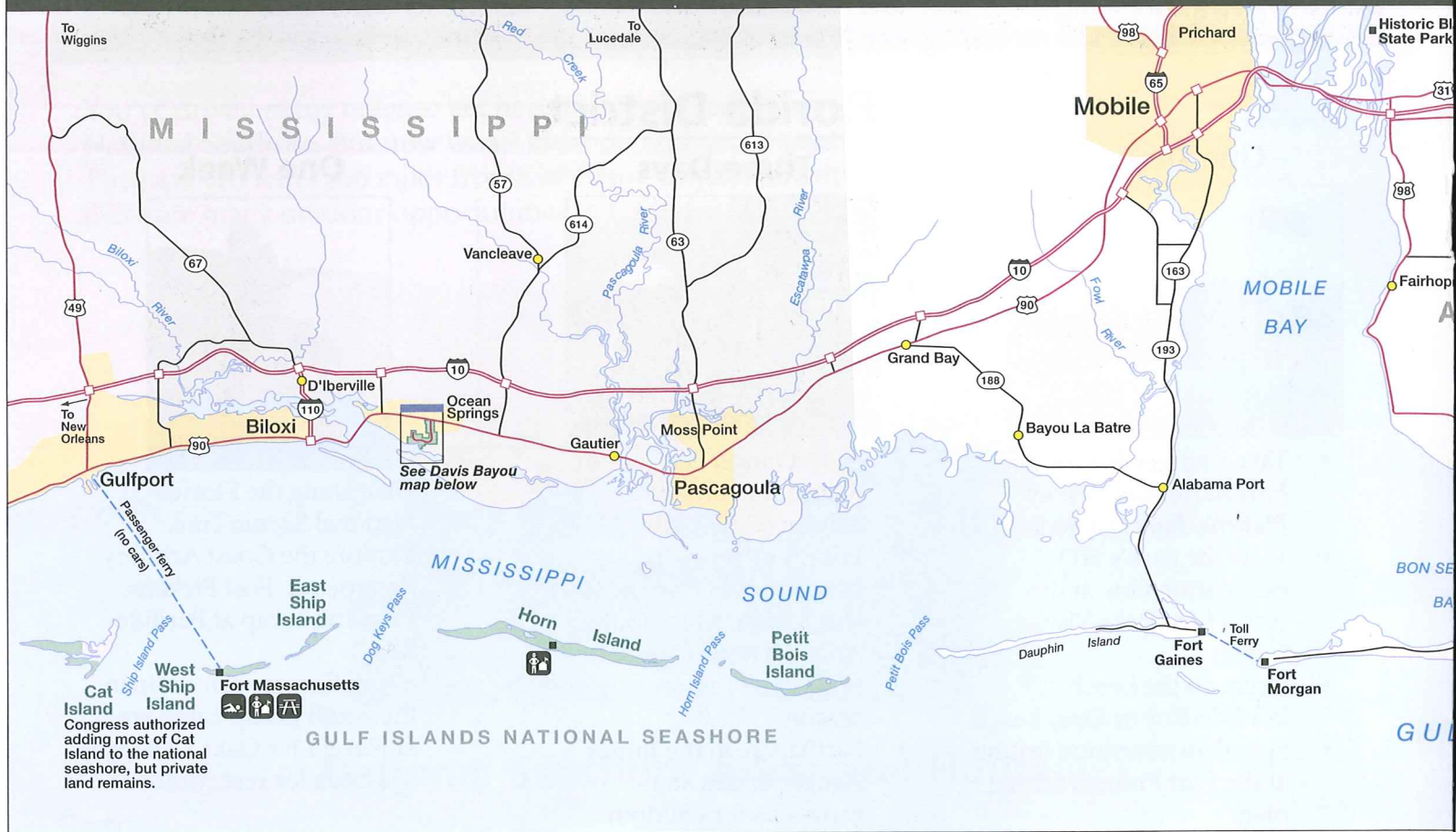


- Take the passenger ferry to West Ship Island (March-October). Fort tours are given daily at 10:15 a.m. and 1:15 p.m.
- Explore Fort Massachusetts on West Ship Island.
- Explore Davis Bayou by canoe or kayak.
- Bike the Live Oaks Bicycling Route.
- Attend a ranger-led program.

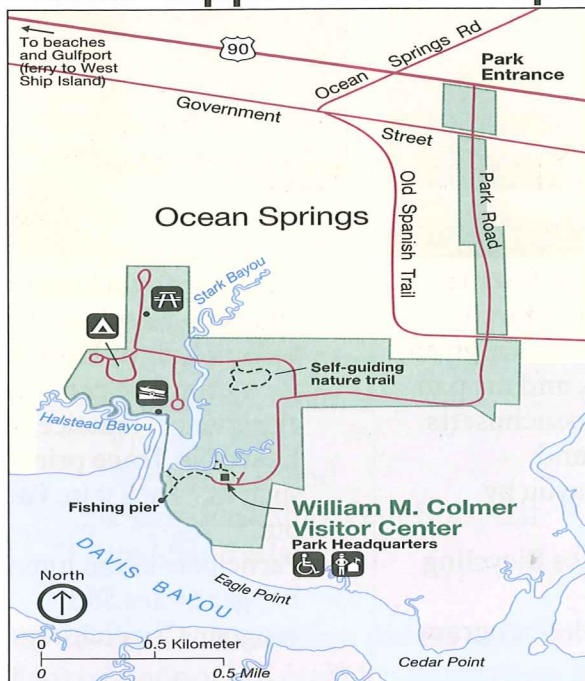
### One Week



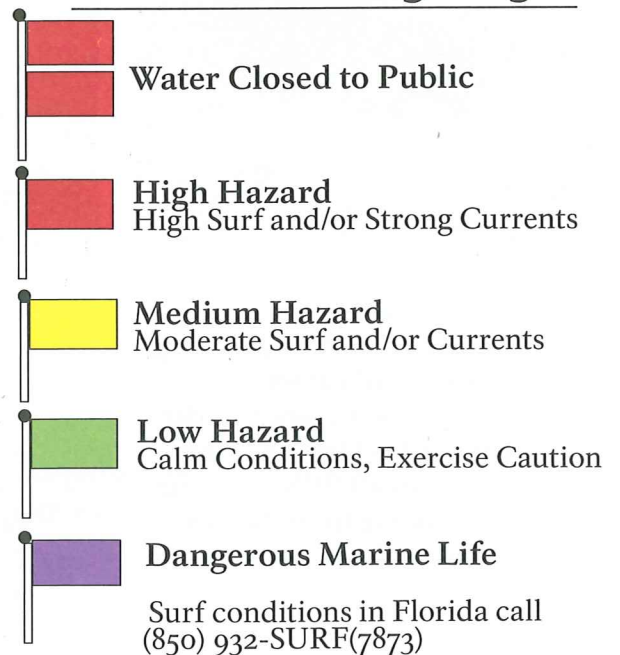
- Take your own boat or charter a vessel and travel to Petit Bois or Horn Island for a primitive camping experience. Practice the Leave No Trace principles, such as, "Pack it in, Pack it out."
- Participate in the Junior Ranger or Sea Star programs for children.



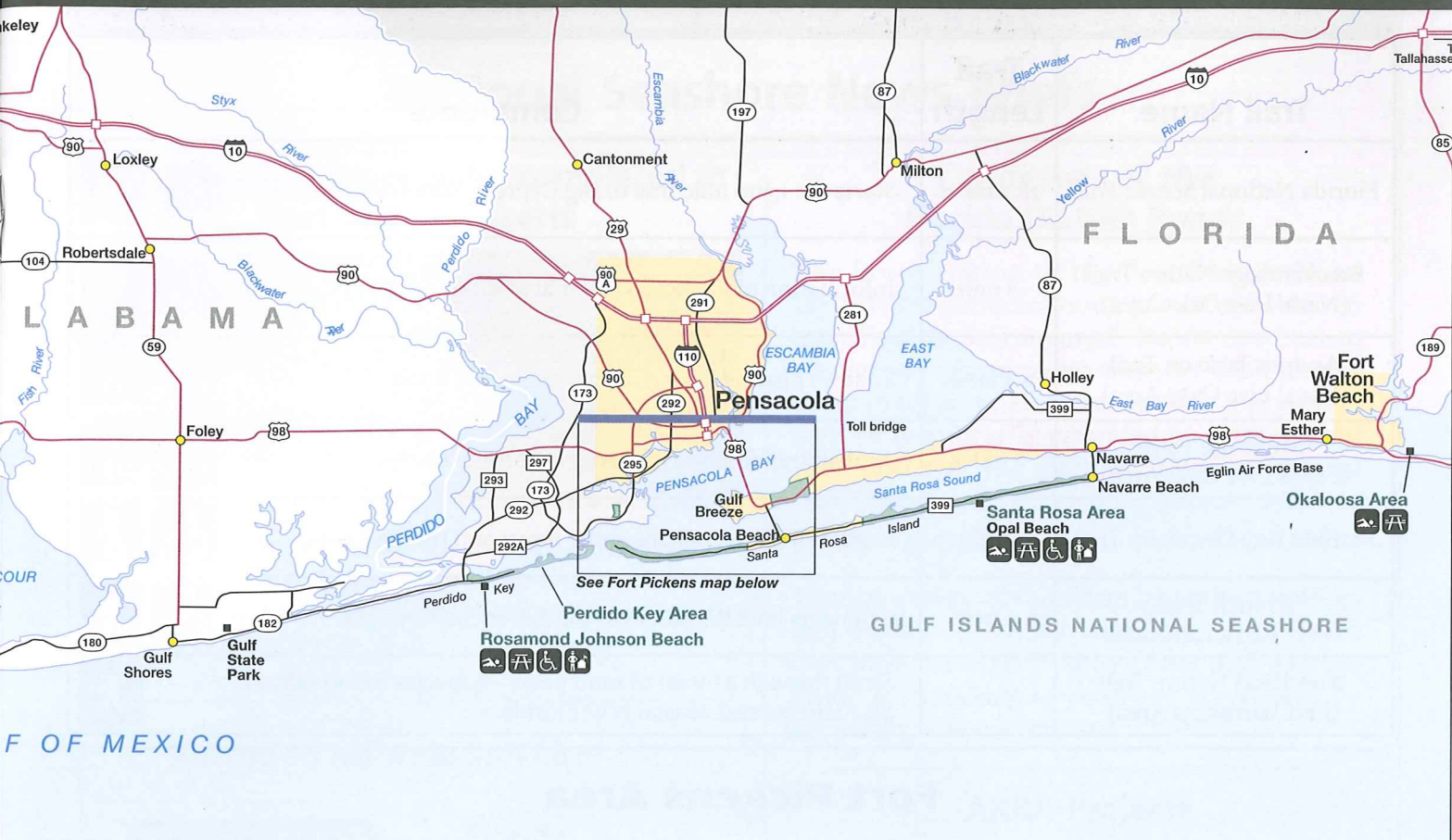
## Mississippi District Map



## Beach Warning Flags



















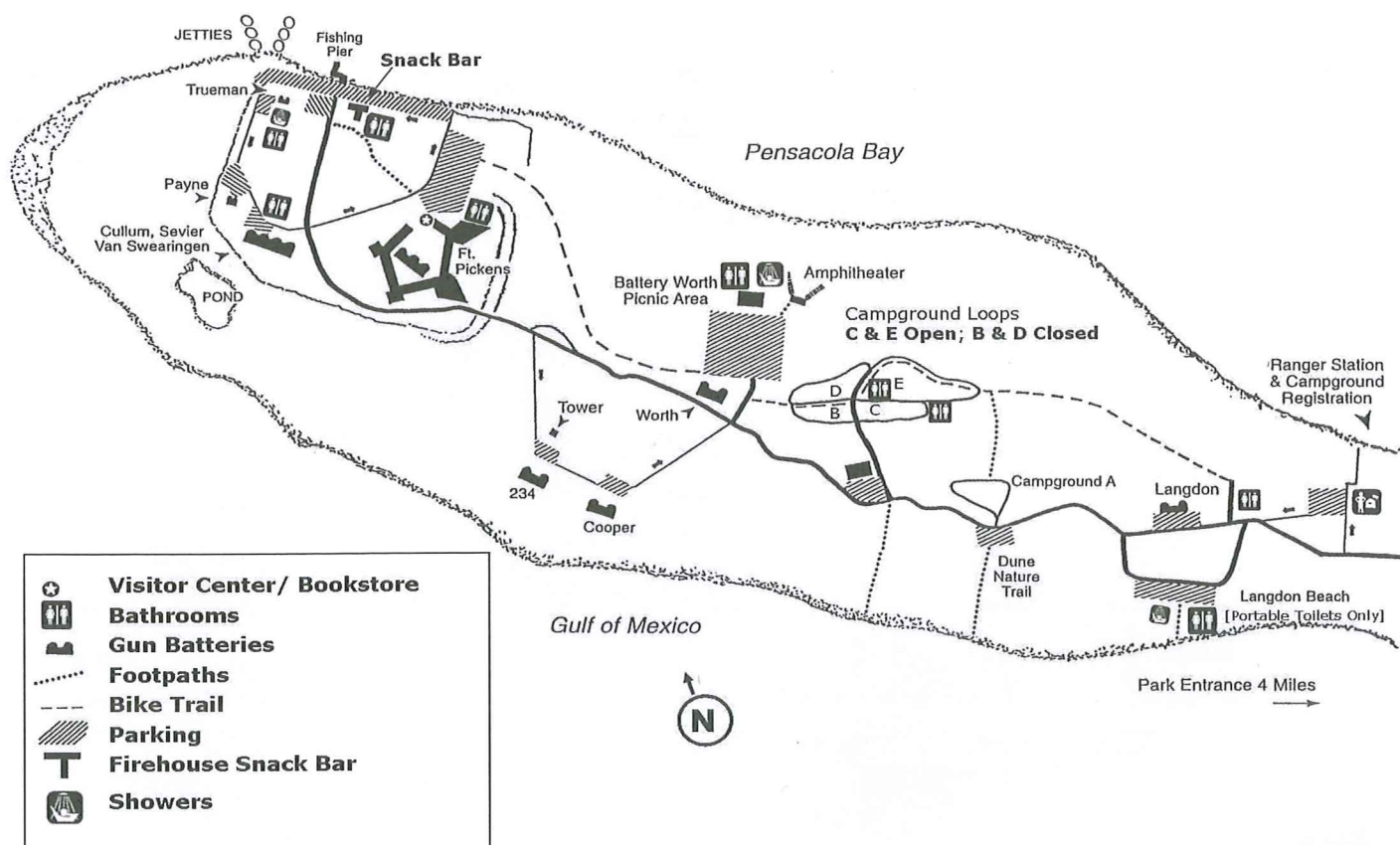
## Florida District Map



# Exploring Florida

Trail Name	Trail Length	Comments	
Florida National Scenic Trail	28.2 miles	Starts the 1,300 mile trail to Big Cypress National Preserve.	 
Brackenridge Nature Trail (Naval Live Oaks Area)	.8 mile	Information on historic uses of live oak trees in shipbuilding.	 
Andrew Jackson Trail (Naval Live Oaks Area)	2.4 miles	Follows historic St. Augustine-Pensacola Road.	
Multi-use Path (Naval Live Oaks Area)	3 miles	Asphalt trail for cyclists, hikers and roller blades.	 
Perdido Key Discovery Trail	.25 mile	Crosses a salt marsh, maritime forest and rolling dunes.	 
Trench Trail (Fort Barrancas Area)	.5 mile	Connects Fort Barrancas to the Advanced Redoubt.	 
Woodland Nature Trail (Fort Barrancas Area)	.5 mile	Stroll through a forest of sand pines - a species found only in SE Alabama and coastal NW Florida.	

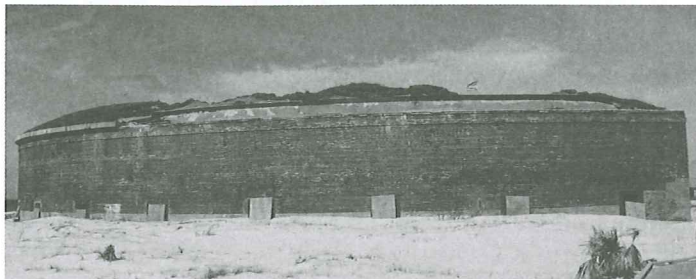
## Fort Pickens Area





## National Seashore News Briefs

### Preservation Work to be completed at Fort Massachusetts



A historic preservation crew will install doors, embrasure shutters, flooring and restore several areas of damaged brickwork, stonework and earthworks throughout the fort in 2010.

### Recorded Information Line



**Dial and Discover.**

**No charge except your plan usage**

**Dial**  
**(850) 677-1089**

**Press**  
**1**  
**Fort Pickens**

**OnCell**  
**AUDIO**

- 1 Rewind
- 2 Pause/Pl.
- 3 Fast Forward
- \*0 Feedback

### Mississippi

- 9 Davis Bayou Area
- 10 West Ship Island
- 11 Horn and Petit Bois Islands
- 12 Cat Island
- 13 Wilderness Camping

### Special Messages

- 14 Sea Turtles
- 15 Nesting Shore Birds
- 16 Surf Warning Flags
- 17 Closures

### Conditions of the Florida District Roads

The low elevation of the Fort Pickens Road subjects it to periodic flooding from wind-driven high tides or storm surge. We do our best to predict and communicate when flood events may occur in advance. However on occasion, visitors may be temporarily stranded by unpredicted road closures. For more information on road conditions contact a visitor contact station or call (850) 934-2656.

There are drop-offs and damage to the bike lanes on J. Earle Bowden Way and Fort Pickens Road that have been marked by cones and barrels. Some restrictions to roadway travel will be necessary to accommodate repairs.

### ARRA Projects

Gulf Islands received \$186,000 under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to construct an accessible boardwalk, install solar powered lights, and clear park boundaries. Under the ARRA, the U.S. Department of Interior is making an investment in conserving America's timeless treasures.










### Boat house completed at Davis Bayou, Mississippi District

Construction of the Mississippi District's boat house was completed. Contact the visitor center for information on all ranger-led programs at (228) 875-9057.



# Exploring Mississippi

Trail Name	Trail Length	Comments
William M. Colmer Visitor Center Trails	100 yards	Begin on the deck behind the visitor center for an outstanding view of a salt marsh full of wildlife. Short walks from the visitor center will take you to the fishing pier overlooking Mississippi Sound or the Davis Bayou Trailhead.  
Nature's Way Trail	.9 mile loop	Traverses a maritime forest, an ancient dune system, and an adjacent salt marsh.  
Live Oaks Bicycling Route	9 mile loop	Winds along roads in the park (2 miles) and the adjacent community of Ocean Springs (7 miles.) 
Davis Bayou Trail	1 mile	Provides a route from the visitor center to the picnic areas with links to the CCC Overlook and Nature's Way Trails. 
CCC Trail	.2 miles	A former Civilian Conservation Corps road bed leads to an overlook of the salt marsh and CCC built ruins. 



## Live Oaks Bicycle Trail

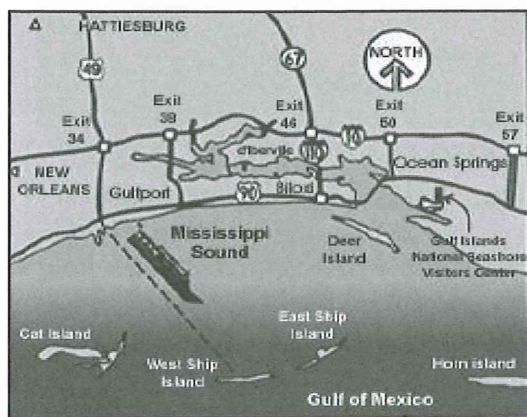
The Live Oaks Bicycle Trail has a new addition that runs east on Brumbaugh Road into the National Seashore. You can explore Ocean Springs and parts of the Davis Bayou Area on this 9-mile loop. This easy trail gives riders more opportunities to exercise, gain car-free access to their national park, and slow down to see this local community.



National Park Concessionaire



## Day Trips to West Ship Island and Fort Massachusetts



Weather permitting, take the one-hour passenger ferryboat to West Ship Island. Departure is from the Gulfport Harbor located at the intersection of U.S. Highways 49 and 90. Tours of Fort Massachusetts are led daily from late March through the end of October. For the ferry schedule call 1-866-466-7386, or 1-228-864-1014, or visit [www.msshipisland.com](http://www.msshipisland.com). A walk around the west tip of the island takes about an hour. Visitors see habitat change from the brackish Mississippi Sound to the Gulf of Mexico.



# Programs for Children

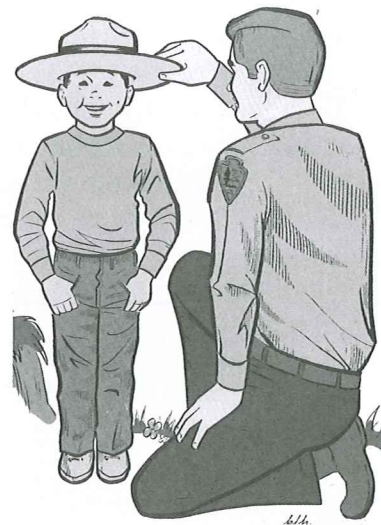
## Junior Rangers and Sea Stars

Hi Kids! Looking for something to do while visiting the park? Become a Junior Ranger (ages 6-11) or a Sea Star (ages 3-5). Pick up your free handbook at one of the visitor centers. All ages are welcome to participate. After completing the program you will be recognized with an official Junior Ranger Badge or Sea Star certificate.



### Be a Ship Island Soldier

Young visitors can learn the drill, wear the uniform and learn about the day-to-day life of Civil War soldiers stationed on Ship Island. This one hour program targets ages 9-12, but everyone is welcome! To arrange a park or classroom visit, group leaders should call (228) 875-9057.



### Be a Web Ranger

Now you can be a Junior Ranger even if you are not able to visit a National Park. Become a member of a growing group of young people who are interested in the natural world around them and with their nation's heritage...The Web Ranger! Visit the web site [www.nps.gov/webrangers](http://www.nps.gov/webrangers) to start your journey.

## Mississippi

Self-guided, curriculum-based programs (M.A.R.S.H. and I.S.L.A.N.D.) plus the "Parks As Classroom for Fourth Graders" are available on the Seashore's website at [www.nps.gov/guis](http://www.nps.gov/guis). If a ranger is available, teachers can reserve a special talk at the Davis Bayou Area in Ocean Springs or a tour of Fort Massachusetts at West Ship Island. The new 25-minute high definition film, "Gulf Islands: Stories of Survival" is available at the visitor center auditorium. A "Traveling Trunk on Wilderness Islands" can be checked out. Call 228-230-4100 for more information.

## School Groups

## Florida

In Florida curriculum-based programs are offered October-November, March-May for students in third through fifth grades. Programs include naturalist barrier island walks at Fort Pickens, Fort Pickens and Fort Barrancas tours. Videos, "Discover the Seashore" and "Pensacola in the Civil War," and traveling trunks "Coastal Critters and Seafaring Sailor" are also available. Naval Live Oaks features the movies "The Lorax" and "Creatures of the Deep" for kindergarden through second grades. Reservations are required. Call (850) 916-3001.



# Safety



## Lifeguarded Beaches Beach Openings Tentative Please call (850) 934-2600

### Remember

- Do not swim at dawn, dusk or night; these are prime feeding times for sharks.
- Do not swim in hazardous surf conditions.
- Use insect repellent when mosquitoes are most active at dawn and dusk.
- Do not pick plants or harass animals in the seashore. Stay on open beaches and marked trails.
- Forts were not designed for comfort or safety. Please use caution when exploring them.
- Do not leave anything valuable in your car.
- Glass containers are not allowed on the beaches or on the Mississippi islands.
- During thunderstorms, move inside a building or vehicle. If swimming or fishing, get out of the water immediately.

### Being Prepared at Gulf Islands

Bringing a few extra items to the Seashore can enhance your visit:

- Wear sunglasses and a hat.
- Use a sun screen lotion with a SPF rating of 30 or higher.
- Carry a flashlight with you while visiting the historic forts that have dark corridors.
- Bring a plastic bottle of vinegar to sooth the pain from contact with a jellyfish.

### What to Do in an Emergency

Call park dispatch at (850) 916-3010 or 911.

During business hours go to a park visitor center.



**National Park Service**  
U.S. Department of the Interior

**Gulf Islands National Seashore**  
Superintendent  
1801 Gulf Breeze Parkway  
Gulf Breeze, FL 32563-5000

3500 Park Road  
Ocean Springs, MS 39564-9709

**Phone**  
(850) 934-2600

**Website**  
[www.nps.gov/guis](http://www.nps.gov/guis)

**Editor**  
Stanley Lawhead

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

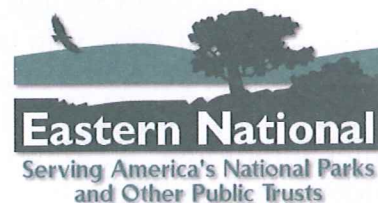


### Volunteers-in-Parks

V.I.P.s share their talents, skills and interests with the National Park Service. For information on volunteer opportunities in this park write to: Volunteer Coordinator, 1801 Gulf Breeze Parkway, Gulf Breeze, Florida 32563-5000.

### Eastern National

Eastern National is a non-profit organization that operates bookstores in national parks and seashores, providing service to the public, and returning a percentage of proceeds to assist visitor services at Gulf Islands National Seashore.



Funding for this newspaper is provided by Eastern National.